

**DOCUMENT # 2**  
**Vermont Futures Project**  
**Handout - Recovery Programming Planning Meeting**  
**June 12, 2009**

**PERSPECTIVES ON PRINCIPLES OF RECOVERY**

Following are excerpts illustrating the convergence of thinking around the key principles and values of recovery.

**SAMHSA -2006<sup>1</sup>**

The 10 Fundamental Components of Recovery include:

- **Self-Direction:** Consumers lead, control, exercise choice over, and determine their own path of recovery by optimizing autonomy, independence, and control of resources to achieve a self determined life. By definition, the recovery process must be self-directed by the individual, who defines his or her own life goals and designs a unique path towards those goals.
- **Individualized and Person-Centered:** There are multiple pathways to recovery based on an individual's unique strengths and resiliencies as well as his or her needs, preferences, experiences (including past trauma), and cultural background in all of its diverse representations. Individuals also identify recovery as being an ongoing journey and an end result as well as an overall paradigm for achieving wellness and optimal mental health.
- **Empowerment:** Consumers have the authority to choose from a range of options and to participate in all decisions—including the allocation of resources—that will affect their lives, and are educated and supported in so doing. They have the ability to join with other consumers to collectively and effectively speak for themselves about their needs, wants, desires, and aspirations. Through empowerment, an individual gains control of his or her own destiny and influences the organizational and societal structures in his or her life.
- **Holistic:** Recovery encompasses an individual's whole life, including mind, body, spirit, and community. Recovery embraces all aspects of life, including housing, employment, education, mental health and healthcare treatment and services, complementary and naturalistic services (such as recreational services, libraries, museums, etc.), addictions treatment, spirituality, creativity, social networks, community participation, and family supports as determined by the

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<sup>1</sup> SAMHSA Issues Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery, 2006. Online: [http://www.samhsa.gov/news/newsreleases/060215\\_consumer.htm](http://www.samhsa.gov/news/newsreleases/060215_consumer.htm)

person. Families, providers, organizations, systems, communities, and society play crucial roles in creating and maintaining meaningful opportunities for consumer access to these supports.

- **Non-Linear:** Recovery is not a step-by step process but one based on continual growth, occasional setbacks, and learning from experience. Recovery begins with an initial stage of awareness in which a person recognizes that positive change is possible. This awareness enables the consumer to move on to fully engage in the work of recovery.

- **Strengths-Based:** Recovery focuses on valuing and building on the multiple capacities, resiliencies, talents, coping abilities, and inherent worth of individuals. By building on these strengths, consumers leave stymied life roles behind and engage in new life roles (e.g., partner, caregiver, friend, student, employee). The process of recovery moves forward through interaction with others in supportive, trust-based relationships.

- **Peer Support:** Mutual support—including the sharing of experiential knowledge and skills and social learning—plays an invaluable role in recovery. Consumers encourage and engage other consumers in recovery and provide each other with a sense of belonging, supportive relationships, valued roles, and community.

- **Respect:** Community, systems, and societal acceptance and appreciation of consumers — including protecting their rights and eliminating discrimination and stigma—are crucial in achieving recovery. Self-acceptance and regaining belief in one's self are particularly vital. Respect ensures the inclusion and full participation of consumers in all aspects of their lives.

- **Responsibility:** Consumers have a personal responsibility for their own self-care and journeys of recovery. Taking steps towards their goals may require great courage. Consumers must strive to understand and give meaning to their experiences and identify coping strategies and healing processes to promote their own wellness.

**Hope:** Recovery provides the essential and motivating message of a better future— that people can and do overcome the barriers and obstacles that confront them. Hope is internalized; but can be fostered by peers, families, friends, providers, and others. Hope is the catalyst of the recovery process.

**NAMI - 2002<sup>2</sup>**

Since persons are at the core of a dynamic interplay among themselves, other people, the resources available in the environment, and other forces, mental health services must recognize and allow for self-agency while bolstering, or at least not undermining, such efforts. Seeing people as whole persons beyond their labeled identity is integral to recovery.

A shift to a recovery orientation will require attention to wellness and health promotion, not simply attention to symptom suppression or clinical concerns. Attention must be paid to basic needs in safe and affordable housing, health care, income, employment, education and social integration.

A recovery orientation will require close attention to fundamental rights and needs. Re-orientation away from coercion requires alternative resources as well as training.

There needs to be a continual evolution in our thinking, and for development of knowledge concerning recovery among diverse communities. For example, the balance of autonomy and self-reliance versus group or family focus may differ in recovery based on such factors as ethnicity and culture. Special attention is needed for people who have experienced trauma or who have substance use disorders.

Resources for re-educating families, consumers, the professions and paraprofessional providers, young people, and the public at-large on the potential for recovery are called for, and will take significant investment. Stigma and misinformation must be countered through a variety of strategies (with attention to incorporating active roles for consumer/survivors) that target many audiences.

Hope and empowerment are critical and their relationship to recovery warrants further research attention.

True parity of decision-making power and respect through mutual and supportive partnership among consumer/survivors, professionals, administrators, and policy makers can become the basis of collaborative efforts to design and implement action strategies that will move America's mental health systems toward a recovery orientation.

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<sup>2</sup> Executive Summary, Mental Health Recovery: What Helps and What Hinders? A National Research Project for the Development of Recovery Facilitating System Performance Indicators. NAMI, 2002. Online: <http://www.namisc.org/Recovery/2002/MentalHealthRecovery.htm> Underscoring added.

Adequate resources are needed to fund and support consumer voice and consumer leadership development.

**REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER ISSUES: SHIFTING TO A RECOVERY-BASED CONTINUUM OF COMMUNITY CARE - MARCH 5, 2003<sup>3</sup>**

**A RECOVERY-ORIENTED MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM**

Mental health research shows that people can and do fully recover, even from the most severe forms of mental illness. Most fundamentally, recovery means having hope for the future, living a self-determined life, maintaining self-esteem, and achieving meaningful roles in society. Most consumers report they want the same things other people want: a sense of belonging, an adequate income, a way to get around, and a decent place to live. They aspire to build an acceptable identity for themselves and in the community at large. These are the essential ingredients of recovery from mental illness.

An emerging literature on the success of the recovery approach comes from the self-help movement, testimony of consumers, the psychiatric rehabilitation community, and research. Public and private sectors of the mental health community are initiating recovery-based programs, services and self-help technologies to overcome the barriers faced by people living with a mental illness in America. Recovery is an organizing principle for mental health services, programs, and supports that is based on consumer values of choice, self-determination, acceptance, and healing.

For recovery to take place, the culture of mental health care must shift to a culture that is based on self-determination, empowering relationships, and full participation of mental health consumers in the work and community life of society. To build a recovery-based system, the mental health community must draw upon the resources of people with mental illness in their communities.

It is widely recognized that changing the mental health system to be more responsive to consumer needs requires the participation of consumers at all levels of policy planning and program development, implementation, and evaluation. Meaningful involvement of consumers in the mental health system can ensure they lead a self-determined life in the community, rather than remaining dependent on the mental health system for a lifetime.

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<sup>3</sup> Summary Report: Consumer Issues Subcommittee, President's New Freedom Commission, March 5, 2003. Online: [http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/subcommittee/Sub\\_Chairs.htm](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/subcommittee/Sub_Chairs.htm) Underscoring added.

A recovery-oriented mental health system embraces the following values:

- Self-Determination
- Empowering Relationships
- Meaningful Roles in Society
- Eliminating Stigma and Discrimination